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ABSTRACT

These four papers are from a symposium on human resource development (HRD) in the United Kingdom. "HRD and Psychological Contracts: A Case Study of Lifelong Learning" (Graeme Martin, Judy Pate, Jim McGoldrick) explores the influence of a lifelong learning program on employee perceptions of their psychological contracts in a longitudinal case study of a major UK employer. "Comparing International HRD Practices and Experiences with Cross-Cultural Theories and Research: A Case Study of the Office for National Statistics" (Dana Bourland, Darren Short) highlights the importance of cultural issues to international HRD, identifies steps to bring international HRD organizations into line with theory, and raises issues for advancing those theories based on practitioner experiences. "Management and Career Development in the UK in Practice" (Paul Iles) does the following: (1) discusses an open systems model of management and career development (MCD); (2) identifies determinants of the amount of in-company management training, its impact on the organization, the degree to which it has achieved its objectives, and determinants of the priority given to MCD; and, (3) explores changing roles and responsibilities in MCD. "Information and Feedback Seeking in U.S. and British Human Resources Development and Training Settings" (K. Peter Kuchinke, Darren C. Short) presents results from rating forms indicating differences in perception of teaching styles and source, frequency, and usefulness of information regarding performance feedback and learning objectives. It suggests adult learners self-regulate in learning situations to a greater degree than instructors anticipate. (YLB)

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23 - 1 HRD and Psychological Contracts: A Case of Lifelong Learning

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23 - 2 Comparing international HRD practices with cross-cultural theories and research: A case study of the Office for National Statistics

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HRD and Psychological Contracts: A Case Study of Lifelong Learning

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This paper explores the influence of a programme of "life-long learning" on employee perceptions of their psychological contracts in a longitudinal case study of a major employer in the UK. The aim of the research is to contribute to the debate on the role of HRD and career development in shaping psychological contracts. The case study data show how the programme helped maintain positive employee relations even during a period of insecurity and retrenchments.

Keywords: Life long learning, Psychological Contracts, Career Development

The context for the research is the recent upsurge in interest in lifelong learning at the political level (Lewis, 1997) and the high profile organizations offering "new deals" in psychological contracting, based the rhetoric of *employability* (Herriot & Pemberton, 1996; Martin, Staines & Pate, 1998). There is, however, a fundamental tension between the attempts to offer new deals in psychological contracts (which are often characterised by low trust relationships) and initiatives such as lifelong learning (which are based on high trust relationships) (Cappelli, 1998; Rousseau, 1995). Consequently, it is sometimes argued that few companies have progressed beyond the level of rhetoric of employability (Herriot, Hirsh & Reilly, 1998; Tregaskis & Brewster, 1998).

Arguably, one company that has gone beyond the rhetoric is NCR in Dundee, Scotland. This company has had a major programme of lifelong learning in operation since 1990 and has received considerable external attention in academic and UK government circles (Martin & Riddell, 1996; Tayeb, 1998; Wheatley & New, 1997). The current strategic and financial situation in the corporation, however, has focused attention on costs and benefits of career development and this internal "soul-searching" has provided the impetus for our investigation.

Accordingly, the paper proceeds as follows. First we briefly bring together diverse strands of existing literature on the psychological contract, career development and the new deal of employability to shed light on the potential relationships between programmes like EFA and organizational change. These bodies of literature are used to inform our research questions. In the second section of the paper, we briefly outline the nature and context of NCR's programme of lifelong learning (EFA). In the third section, we examine the results of our case study data to show how the programme has shaped the psychological contracts of employees in the plant over the period 1993-98. In the final section, we discuss the results of our investigation and their implications for researchers and practitioners.

The Literature on HRD, the Psychological Contract and Trust Relations

At the heart of our discussion of the relationship between HRD, career development and trust relations is the concept of the psychological contract, which has become increasingly important in explaining many aspects of current employee relations and performance (Cully, O' Reilly, Millward, Forth, Woodland, Dix & Bryson, 1998; Guest, 1997). We do not propose to review the extensive literature on psychological contract breach here. It is sufficient to point out that recent US research has shown how transactional and relational contracts (Rousseau, 1995) have had different implications for employee behaviour. These studies have mapped out the connections between contract breach, violation, trust relations and important HR attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. First, the extent to which employees are likely to define employer breaches of the contract as violation appears to be moderated by the quality of *trust relations* (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Second perceived contract violation has been shown to lead to a deterioration in trust relations (Robinson, 1996) and increased levels of *employee cynicism* (Andersson, 1996; Dean, Brandes & Dharwadkar, 1998). In turn, deteriorating trust relations and increased cynicism towards management and the organization are associated with *lower work motivation, job satisfaction and commitment* (Reichers, Wanous & Austin, 1997).

In the UK, Guest and Conway (1997) have examined the antecedents of psychological contracts, their content and their consequences and have provided some important insights into changing nature of UK employment

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relations. They have identified the nature of the *organizational climate* and the *involvement climate* as significant causes of positive psychological contracts. These contracts, in turn, were defined by the extent to which employees perceived their employers to be *fair*, whether or not employees *trusted* their employers, and the extent to which *promises by employers were perceived to be delivered*. Such positive contracts resulted in *attitudinal outcomes* such as high levels of commitment and job satisfaction, and *behavioural outcomes* such as organizational citizenship and effort.

Evidence on the Psychological Contract and Training and Development: Declining Levels of Trust and Cynicism

At least three positions are discernible on the impact of environmental change on psychological contracts.

What Has Changed?

The first position draws on "objective" evidence of changes in psychological contracts and careers. For example, in the UK, Guest, Conway, Dickman & Briner (1996) concluded that "the traditional psychological contract built around job security and a career is still alive and surprisingly well" (Guest et al., 1996, p. 1). They have received some support from economic data that have shown the position on job tenure to be no worse in the early 1990's than in 1975 (Burgess, 1997). Interestingly, these data do not square with the early findings of the recent UK Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS, 1998). This research, although silent on employee perceptions of job security, points to significant increases in different forms of flexible working over the last five years – particularly contracting out (Cully, et al., 1998).

The Need for a New Organizational Career Philosophy

The second position or thesis is that although significant market and organizational change may have occurred, organizational career philosophy has yet to catch up in all but the most enlightened organizations. This is the essentially normative argument concerning the new deal being offered by some employers. For example, Adamson, Doherty & Viney (1998) in the UK and Cappelli (1998) in the US have argued that organizations are now talking not of opportunities for advancement and/or progression but of opportunities to improve *marketability* and *employability*. These researchers outline key changes in career philosophy that are predicated on the break-down in long-term employer-employee relationships and future time orientation of careers. They foresee that career progression is no longer likely to involve upward hierarchical movement in the one organization but is more likely to involve lateral development.

What About the Employees?

Essentially, researchers associated with this perspective have acknowledged that important changes have occurred but point to the negative consequences of these changes for careers and psychological contracts (Herriot & Pemberton, 1995; Herriot, Hirsh & Reilly, 1998; Kanter & Mirvis, 1989; Hutchison, Kinnie & Purcell, 1996). The argument here is that psychological contracts have come under pressure as a consequence of the competitive conditions of the 1980's and 1990's and the associated policies of employers in trying to do "more with less" and in "leaning out" organizations. The received wisdom has been that employers have been drawn towards more flexible organizational structures with the "knock-on" consequences for decreasing levels of job security.

Some of these claims are supported by the recent WERS data (Cully, et. al., 1998). One of the report's major conclusions is:

> ...a significant minority of employees feel that the overall deal they have – their implicit, or psychological contract – is a poor one. Lower levels of job satisfaction are particularly evident among some groups and among those who feel inadequately consulted and, to a lesser extent, those who do not have access to *training* (our emphasis)...(p.28).

Firmly rooted in this "what's in it for employees" perspective on HRD and psychological contracts are two lines of relevant discourse and evidence. The first of these is a thesis based on the concept of trust and transitions by Herriot, Hirsh & Reilly (1998). They contend that the recent response of organizations to economic pressures through new dealing has further decreased trust in management to do as they say. Furthermore, recent *perceptions* of job insecurity have exacerbated this low trust dynamic. However, they argue that organizations are responding

to environmental pressures by ever more frequent transitions in products/services, structure and culture. Such transitions have implications for individual career management that require people to participate willingly in achieving a balance between short and long term considerations such as growth and contraction or centralisation and devolution of decisions. This balancing act is contingent on the trust relationships in organizations; if high levels of trust exist, managing transitions becomes easier because employees have faith in the company to do "the right thing" in the long term. Without such trust, employees will become increasingly sceptical and cynical of managerial rhetoric and disengage from or oppose those very transitions on which organizational success is based (Reichers, Wanous & Austin, 1997). This position has received support from a major US study by Tsui, Pearce, Porter & Tripoli (1997) which found that investment in employees appears to "pay off". Their research showed that employees performed better, demonstrated greater organizational citizenship behaviour and higher levels of affective commitment in situations when employers engaged in "mutual investment" relationships with employees. Whereas circumstances in which employees perceived they were working in "under-investment" relationships with their employers produced the worst results on attitude and performance variables such as absence, performance on core tasks and citizenship behaviour. They concluded that the overall pattern of their results provided support more support for the mutual investment relationship, in which "open-ended inducements provided by employers are balanced by open ended contributions from employees" (p. 1113).

Conclusions From the Literature

This discussion on the psychological contract and the so-called new deal leads us to four relevant conclusions. First, the conceptual and empirical literature on both sides of the Atlantic point strongly to the conclusion that promises on, and the level of investment in, HRD and career development are important *antecedents* of psychological contract breach and violation (Andersson, 1996; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Second, perceptions of contract breach and violation over HRD and career development are likely to lead to deteriorating trust relations and increased employee cynicism concerning programmes of organizational change. Third, these negative attitudes and emotions are likely to result in significant under-performance in areas such as productivity, quality and innovation because of their affects on the *ability and motivation* of individuals to change (Guest, 1997). Fourth, the jury is still out on the empirical evidence on the "new deal" and the calls for changes in organizational career philosophy. Although there is some positive evidence on careers and new dealing, some researchers have argued that new dealing is mere rhetoric and is likely to be met by lowering degrees of trust, commitment and performance amongst many employees. This is particularly so amongst those employees that lack sufficient external labour market power to benefit from new deals.

Method

The case study is of NCR (Dundee), a Scottish subsidiary of a major US multinational enterprise (MNE). The Dundee plant is a world leader in the design and manufacture of financial services equipment, predominantly automatic teller machines (ATM's) and has won a number of awards for its exporting and manufacturing performance (Wheatley & New, 1997). The programme called Education-for-all (EFA), which has been in operation for eight years, has had a broad focus on education. It has also attempted to be inclusive by engaging the whole workforce.

Education for All

NCR (Dundee) have been one of a small number of high profile companies that have attempted to maintain long-term employment relationships by *investing in employees* and committing themselves to *job security* (Denton, 1998; Martin & Riddell, 1996; Tayeb, 1998). In the early 1990's senior management took a decision to invest in a high risk and somewhat unfashionable programme of long term education as a means of producing significant organizational change. At different points in the plants' history, these measures represented significant high trust initiatives that were intended to signify to the Dundee workforce that they had a long term future with the Company and that investing in people was central to its plans. EFA1 began in 1990 and was intended as a key

2 The key features of EFA are to encourage self-development amongst employees by paying for, and supporting with time-off work, any form of educational course broadly related to the business of the company. Such courses must lead to a recognised national qualification and be supported by the employee's manager.

underpinning for the Dundee company's strategic objectives of growth through continuous innovation, customer-focus and cost-competitiveness. To fully understand the progress of EFA, it is necessary to show (a) how it is embedded in a particular historical and organizational context, and (b) how the programme may have changed over time (Pettigrew, 1995). Our case study plant in Britain began life as a subsidiary of NCR, a Midwestern-based US MNE. The plant had a very patchy early history. Employment rose dramatically between 1945-70, reaching a peak of some 6,300 employees in 1970. However by 1972, NCR's traditional world markets began to diminish rapidly in the face of intense and successful Japanese competition. By 1980, employment in the British plant was down to 820 people, with strong rumours that the plant was scheduled for closure.

By the time of the launch of EFA in 1990, however, the fortunes of the British subsidiary had turned around dramatically with NCR (Dundee) having become the *world leader* in its market. This position has been maintained in a fast growing market in which product innovation has been a key factor. During this period the Scottish company won national and international recognition for its achievements in exporting and plant management (Kotter, 1995;Wheatley & New, 1997). Currently, the Dundee plant employees some 1500 managers, design and development engineers and assembly workers.

In 1997, however, a change in (US-driven) corporate direction towards a "solutions" strategy resulted in significant outsourcing and in the recent sale of manufacturing facilities. These moves have had a clear impact on the Dundee plant, who remain one of the few integrated design *and* manufacturing operations in the NCR corporation. Following these changes in strategy, a general air of uncertainty has pervaded the Dundee plant. Moreover, for the first time since 1980 and despite record order books and production, 200 hundred redundancies out of a total headcount of 1500 employees were announced in March, 1998, following decisions to outsource aspects of production in Dundee. This discussion of the nature of the EFA programme and its contextual embeddedness has important implications for the state of psychological contracts in the Dundee plant at the present time. So, following our conclusions from the literature review, we have sought answers to the following questions of our case study data:

Question 1 During the context of growth and job security (1990-early 1997), did the EFA programme lead employees to perceive that they were being treated fairly in relation on career development and were these perceptions an important influence on employees' psychological contracts?

Question 2 During a context of growth and high job security (1990-early 1997), did the EFA programme have a positive impact on employee trust in management and key outcomes of the psychological contract such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship and motivation?

Question 3. During the current periods of insecurity (1997-98), did EFA have a reduced impact on employee perceptions of fairness, trust in management and key outcomes of the psychological contract such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship and motivation, and

Question 4 Have employees in NCR adjusted to perceptions of job insecurity and feelings of powerlessness through increased cynicism and by engaging in a more transactional form of relationship?

The Data

The research is essentially a retrospective account of work that has been conducted intermittently over a four-year period between 1994-98. We have drawn on three sets of data collected between 1993 and 1997. First, we undertook an interim survey of participants on EFA in July, 1995 to assess the programme and its effects on key HRD objectives, including commitment to the company and its impact on careers. Second, primary interview data were collected during the Spring of 1998. These data were collected from twenty semi-structured interviews with employees and their managers drawn from different departments, occupational groupings, levels and stages in their respective careers to capture *maximum variety* of experiences (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Third, we have also used secondary data from in-company surveys that are conducted every six months. These data provide a quantitative account of changes in key elements of employee psychological contracts during the period 1993-97. Thus, we were able to track changes in *inputs into psychological contracts* such as employee perceptions of the involvement climate, job security and the company as an employer. We were also able to assess the changing state or *content of psychological contracts* by using proxy variables for fairness and trust such as recognition from management for doing a good job and the extent to which employees feel valued by the company. Finally, we could assess changes in key measures of *outcomes of psychological contracts* such as individual job satisfaction and overall satisfaction with the company.

The Results

Our first question was aimed at assessing employee expectations on career development and the extent to which these had been satisfied during the context of job security and growth. As our literature review has shown, these expectations are an important influence on perceptions of psychological contract breach.

The Impact of EFA on Expectations of Career Development.

The 1995 survey data showed that participants on EFA programmes were positive about career development in the company with nearly 40% of respondents changing jobs or been promoted since completing their EFA courses. Moreover, of that 40% nearly three-quarters claimed that EFA had been a contributory factor in securing promotion. Respondents were also asked how successful their EFA courses had been in achieving their career development aspirations. Nearly one third of respondents attributed part of the career development to EFA with a further 10% prepared to believe that it might be a future contributory factor.

The interview data conducted in 1998 were broadly consistent with these earlier perceptions. Although there were variety of reasons given for undertaking an EFA programme, the most common response was for some form of self- development. However, most interviewees also saw education as providing the means to either upward promotion or to a sideways change in their job.

The longer-term attitude survey data on training and development (covering the period 1993-97) provided some inconsistent data. On balance, however, it showed that respondents felt that the company had encouraged skill development and that staff in the plant had been given enhanced opportunities to develop their skills between 1993 and 1997.

In summary, the impact of EFA on expectations of career development was positive and these expectations were broadly being met by the EFA programme.

The Impact of EFA on the Outcomes of Psychological Contracts in the Plant during 1993-97

Our second, third and fourth questions concern the impact of EFA on the outcomes of psychological contracts and the influence of context. During the earlier period of job security between 1993-97, the data from the 1995 survey showed that EFA had a positive impact on key elements of employees' psychological contracts. For example, employees reported EFA as having a significant impact on their view of the company as an employer and was also more inclined to make them stay with the Company.

Three years later, however, our interviews raised some questions about psychological contracts in the plant. A number of interviewees expressed views that were indicative of an emerging transactional contract, with stress being place on how the programme made them more employable externally. Thus although most interviewees saw NCR as a fair or good employer that treated people consistently, only a few saw EFA has having made them any more favourably disposed to NCR than previously (admittedly from a high base). Furthermore, in response to questions concerning what they actually gained from participating in EFA, employees cited three main benefits all of which related to their own feelings of self worth, development and features not directly connected with knowledge and skills acquisition.

1. EFA as compensation for dull jobs,
2. EFA as personal development, and
3. EFA as group development

These qualitative data were broadly in line with the survey results of the whole workforce comparing 1993-97. Thus, by 1997, certain key aspects of employee perceptions of the psychological contract were significantly less positive than in 1993. The main areas of concern expressed by employees were:

i. There seemed to be less faith in colleagues' ability to cooperate to get the job done.
ii. Unconvinced that clear and well documented policies and procedures were in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour
iii. Less satisfied with the company and their job.
iv. More negative about the company as compared to other companies as an employer.

Even where the results of the comparison between the two period were positive, such as involvement in decision making, the data gave no impression that the Company had done well in this regard. This finding was supported by the interview material, which implied that opportunities for involvement were not meeting employees' expectations.

These results described in the previous paragraphs raise the question of whether the context of uncertainty and insecurity had begun to affect the psychological contracts in the plant. Certainly, the results of the question on job security showed a dramatic and understandable decline between the two time periods. Consequently, we would have expected this feature of the psychological contract to have a marked negative influence on virtually every other aspect of company policy and practice. The survey data on the whole workforce shows the predicted negative influence of job insecurity appears to have been borne out, with the exception of a significant improvement in two key areas, i.e. in the area of *career development* and in the *involvement climate.* Such a finding, we believe, allows us to speculate on the positive long-term influence of EFA on *trust relations* in the Dundee plant. In short, our belief is that EFA has had a strong compensating effect. Thus, we argue, had it not been for EFA (in combination with other HR policies), it is likely that employees (particularly those that participated in the programme) would have held even more negative perceptions of the company and of their future with it. At least in the areas of career development and involvement, employees saw the company as continuing to deliver the old deal. This speculation is supported by the interviews with EFA participants. Although most interviewees felt less secure at the present time because of the uncertain future of the Dundee plant, in general these feelings did not appear to influence their attitudes to the company, with only a minority feeling more negative than before.

Discussion

To-date most of the interest and research on life long learning has focused on government policies and educational provision and little, if any, systematic research has been undertaken on organizations that have well-developed programmes in place. The data from the case generally show that the programme has had a positive influence on career development and psychological contracts during the period of study. This was even so during the current context of uncertainty and job insecurity.

Concerning our first question on the relationship between EFA and perception of fairness on career development, the quantitative and qualitative data strongly supported the conclusion that EFA had a positive influence on employee perceptions of career development. To a lesser extent, because we only have interim data, they also support the association between participating in EFA and internal movements and transfers within the company. The second question focused on the relationship between job security, EFA and the psychological contract. In this connection, EFA was found to have had a marked positive influence on employee psychological contracts, in that it had helped create commitment to the company, caused employees to see the company as a fair employer and also give them a sense of self-worth.

The third question explored the relationship between the context of job insecurity and perceptions of trust and key outcomes of the psychological contract. Here, we can conclude that EFA had remained an important symbol of the old deal and a signifier to employees that they had a long-term relationship with a "good employer." In contrast to nearly every other aspect of employee perceptions about the company and their relationships with it, career development was seen in a positive light. Indeed, we believe that the data show – and our subsequent discussions with mangers support this assertion - that promises kept on EFA have helped mitigate the potentially damaging effects of redundancies and uncertainty about the future of the Company. Our fourth question concerned the move to more transactional forms of relationships and the consequences of these for future organizational change. Our data in these areas are not robust but are indicative that job insecurity has led to employees beginning to perceive a breach of the old deal by the company and to the emergence of transactional contracting by employees in their attitudes to EFA. As might be expected, employees were beginning to stress benefits that were more connected with external employability and as compensation for what they were unable to get from working in the company.

Our overall conclusions and speculation are in line with the recent arguments of Herriot, Hirsh and Reilly (1998) and the findings of Tsui, Pearce, Porter & Tripoli (1997) discussed previously. We believe that one of the strongest benefits that the programme has brought to this organization is the high trust response from employees in the company, even under conditions of adversity. Although morale and overall satisfaction with the company is currently low, employees still see themselves as being treated fairly, especially those who have taken advantage of EFA courses. Moreover, employees have not resisted the current changes through taking industrial action, even

though they would have been strategically placed to do so due to booming order books. Indeed there is every sign, according to HR staff and union officials, that they have co-operated with the changes being put in place. However, we believe there are strong warning signs that the trust dividend reaped through a programme like EFA may be diminishing. The data suggest that employees are focusing more on the employability aspects of EFA, which in tight labour market conditions may lead them to use education as a passport out of the organization (Cappelli, 1998). Perhaps more importantly, we speculate that any significant move towards more transactional contracting by pruning EFA may create a downward trust dynamic that will make organizational change more difficult to achieve. This is particularly likely to be so, as a number of studies have indicated (Haskell, 1998; Huemer, von Krogh & Roos, 1998; Nonaka & Tageuchi, 1995), when a company relies on knowledge creation and on the build-up of intellectual capital for its global market leadership.

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Comparing International HRD Practices and Experiences With Cross-cultural Theories and Research: A Case Study of the Office for National Statistics

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In this paper, the authors report on the experiences and practices of a small-scale international HRD provider and compare them to cross-cultural HRD theory. This case study highlights the importance of cultural issues to international HRD, identifies steps to bring international HRD organizations into line with theory, and raises issues for advancing those theories based on practitioner experiences.

Keywords: International HRD, Cross-Culturual Theory, Case Study

The setting for this study is the Office for National Statistics (ONS), a public sector department of the British government responsible for the collection and analysis of most official statistics as well as for the registration of births, deaths, and marriages, and the ten year population census. The Human Resource Development (ONS HRD) team consists of 27 internal HRD trainers and consultants who provide a wide range of leadership, management, computing, statistical, and general skills training and consultancy in addition to supporting other employee development initiatives.

Research Problem

Since 1995, ONS HRD has been involved in projects with statistical organizations in other countries with funding from the UK and European Union development aid budgets. This involvement began with a Bulgarian management development program, and was expanded in 1996 with a major program, on-going, to provide leadership and management training in the Hungarian equivalent of the ONS. A similar program in Slovakia followed, as well as work with the Ukraine and Russia. At the time of writing, further work was being arranged in Europe, as well as Asia and Africa.

As ONS HRD's international workload expanded into new countries, its senior management became increasingly interested in the need to offer a professional service to match other potential providers. Professional service in this instance was defined, in part, relative to perceived best practice as informed by HRD theory. Although this practice-based research was stimulated by the need to improve HRD effectiveness, ONS HRD managers were keen to also contribute to the theory-research-development-practice cycle (Swanson, 1988) by informing the development of HRD theory. The research problem was therefore defined to identify how existing international HRD experiences and practices at the ONS compared with best practice in cross-cultural consultancy, and to draw conclusions about the changes needed to those practices and the implications for advancing theories.

Theoretical Framework

The most frequently cited theories on culture are those of Hofstede (1980), the Halls (1990), and Trompenaars (1994). In addition, a large number of other published works have described research and reflective practitioner accounts either on the culture of a single country or on the general topic of cross-cultural consultancy and international HRD. A literature review of books and articles led to a clustering of content into the headings of: national cultures and their differences; the influence of national cultures on organizational culture; the suitability of Western HRD for application in other cultures; and the implications for HRD consultants. Each are addressed here in turn.

The published literature contains many definitions of culture, all rather close in meaning to Hofstede's, "culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one category of people from

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those of another" (1980, p. 25). One natural grouping of people is at the national level where certain behaviors are favored and others repressed, and the norm for a society is the most common and generally most acceptable pattern of values, attitudes, and behavior (Adler, 1991). Those patterns of values, attitudes, and behaviors are then disseminated to new members by symbols and artifacts (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, cited in Adler, 1991), and are manifested through characteristics such as communication and language, dress and appearance, food and feeding habits, time and time consciousness, rewards and recognition, relationships, values and norms, sense of self and space, mental process and learning, beliefs and attitudes (Harris & Moran, 1979). When combined, these factors create distinctive national cultures which most likely contain sub-cultures, including regional, occupational, educational, ethnic, religious, gender, and age-group cultures.

Several authors have sought to define the dimensions along which national cultures differ. For example, Hofstede (1980) identified four major dimensions of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity; and to those Hofstede (1991) later added long-term orientation. Hall and Hall (1990) also illustrated how cultures differ according to the four basic principles of cultural interfacing: space, time, information flow, and context. Trompenaars (1994) examined how cultures differ in relationship to time, other humans, and towards nature.

In Eastern Europe, national cultures have been influenced by the common heritage of adhering to a totalitarian form of government (Harris & Moran, 1979), although several authors warn of assuming that national cultures are therefore the same. Hungary, for example, was considered ahead of other Eastern European countries in terms of market orientation (Czaban & Whitley, 1998), and since 1989 differences in policies as well as changes in structural and economic positioning have amplified differences between countries (Estrin & Peiperl, 1998). Consequently, such countries cannot be viewed has having similar, nor static, cultures.

At a level below national culture, organizations have their own culture and sub-cultures (Schein, 1985). Some of the differences between organization cultures are due to the effects of national culture (Adler, 1991) as evidenced from the same problems being addressed using different means in each country (Trompenaars, 1994, DiStefano & Lane, 1992), the different operation of human resource management within national cultures (Sparrow, Shuler, & Jackson, 1994, cited in Tregaskis, 1998), and different experiences and understanding of common organizational terms such as authority, bureaucracy, and accountability (Harris & Moran, 1979). Wigglesworth (1995) also noted the influence of such factors as national values, perceptions, cultural heritage, unique ways of doing business, behavioral customs, and the processing of information.

In Eastern Europe, where ONS HRD does all of its existing international consultancy, organizational cultures have also been affected by problems in recruiting sufficient qualified employees (Estril & Peiperl, 1998), the challenges of transition from state-ownership (Cseh, 1997), the need for innovative management development approaches (Cseh, 1997), and the need for adapting theories and methodologies across cultures (Santalainen & Taino, 1984).

As a consequence of national culture and its impact on organizations, there are significant issues for HRD consultants working outside of their own culture. Some deal with the appropriateness of applying US American organization and management theory in other countries, and specifically the need for adaptability of content, systems, and practices (Adler, Campbell, & Laurent, 1989, Tregaskis, 1998). Others deal with the need for HRD consultants working outside of their own culture to be aware of: the cultural values and assumptions inherent in HRD (Sorensen, Head, Johnson, & Mathys, 1991), knowledge of the visited culture (Harris & Moran, 1979), and knowledge of their own culture (Wigglesworth, 1995). That is in addition to consultants requiring other competencies viewed as fundamental for working in other countries, such as the understanding of others, tolerance of ambiguity, interaction skills, and persistence (Wigglesworth, 1995).

Research Questions

The research problem was to identify how existing international HRD experiences and practices at the ONS compared against best practice in cross-cultural consultancy as suggested by theory and research, and to draw conclusions about the changes needed to those practices and the implications for advancing those theories. The theoretical framework identified several key aspects of best practice on the need to adapt HRD content and processes, develop international competencies, and identify local business etiquette. The research was therefore designed to answer the following questions:

- What was the existing level of awareness of cross-cultural HRD issues among ONS consultants, how were cultural competencies developed, and how was the utility of international HRD and cross-cultural theories perceived by those consultants?
- What processes were in place to adapt ONS HRD course content, HRD processes, and trainer behaviors to suit host countries, and what were the roles of the various parties (ONS HRD, funding agencies, host countries) in assessing the suitability of, and adapting, the content, processes, and behaviors?
- What had been the experiences of ONS HRD consultants during international work (including identifying critical incidents) and could those be understood through the theoretical framework?
- What changes to the existing ONS HRD practices were suggested by the theoretical framework?
- What lessons from ONS experiences offer opportunities for advancing HRD understanding?

Research Design

As Torraco (1997) stated, "case studies, more than other methods of study, allow researchers to focus specifically on a phenomenon of interest, and they offer the greatest potential for revealing the richness, holism, and complexity of naturally occurring events" (p. 130). Even though this research was seeking to provide information to improve the effectiveness of one specific HRD team, the researchers wanted to use case study methodology to design an instrumental study (Stake, 1994) so as to understand the issue of international HRD and help advance theory.

Qualitative research methods were used given their suitability for exploration and discovery in times of emerging realities, and rapid and fundamental change (Swanson, Watkins, & Marsick, 1997). Interviews were preferred to questionnaires given the small number of consultants involved, the ease of access to them, the potential to explore answers in depth, and the past success of interviews in the organization. Observations were not possible given the cost of attending international courses and the timing, which did not coincide with course delivery. Organization records studied were: course programs and materials, evaluation reports, and reports of visits made by senior ONS consultants to Hungary and Slovakia. As it happened, those documents were useful preparation for the design of interviews but provided relatively little information when compared with interview evidence.

Interviews were arranged with representatives of three groups: funding agencies (three interviews with the UK's Department for International Development, the Training for European Statisticians project in Luxembourg, and the European Commission); ONS HRD consultants (six interviews, three with the most experienced consultants and three with a sample of the six other consultants selected to cover different levels of experience); and other ONS staff with recent international consultancy experience (three interviews with consultants, all of whom had provided statistical training advice to countries in which ONS HRD was yet to work but where contracts were possible in the future).

Semi-structured interviews were used whereby all interviewees were asked the same set of core open-ended questions, although in a conversational format so that not all interviewees were asked questions in the same order. Those core questions were designed around the research questions, in addition to those on their backgrounds and relevant experience. Three separate lists of additional questions were used for interviews with those from funding agencies (dealing with their role), ONS HRD consultants (dealing with HRD-specific issues and experiences), and other ONS consultants (dealing with issues specific to the countries they had worked in). In addition to core questions, the interview structure allowed sufficient scope for additional probing, which mainly occurred to explore examples of critical incidents (stories from practical experience).

All interviews were completed by the same interviewer in September 1998, and were recorded on audio-cassettes. Interviews were listened to again by the interviewer, key points transferred onto a wordprocessor file, clustered for analysis under research question headings, and a chronological chain of evidence created to order data (Swanson, et al, 1998). The authenticity of the data analysis was verified through feedback to informants (by interview and draft written reports), which also provided additional information on the meaning of outliers and guided the correct weighting of evidence. The literature review on international HRD was also re-visited and expanded slightly at the analysis stage to provide a deeper understanding of emerging themes (Marsick and Watkins, 1997).

Results and Findings

Awareness of Cultural Issues, Development of Cultural Competencies, and Perceived Utility of Theories

The interviews identified considerable enthusiasm for international HRD within the ONS team and a desire for continuing learning from experiences. However, very few interviewees knew of cross-cultural theories, and some expressed doubts about how theories could benefit their work. For example, the view was expressed that the need to address cultural differences was reduced considerably by offering mainly process models.

There was a strong focus on developing competence through experience, and in that way the most experienced consultants had developed a good awareness of practical cross-cultural issues which they then sought to share with the less-experienced through oral briefings and a practice of pairing experienced and inexperienced consultants for international projects. Nevertheless, awareness of cultural issues varied considerably between consultants depending on the nature of their experiences and the thoroughness of their subsequent reflection, and was affected by the unsystematic way in which cross-cultural knowledge was disseminated within the team. Apart from the most-experienced consultants, interviewees reported little preparatory work on the culture of an assisted country prior to visits, and one less experienced consultant commented that s/he, "went abroad appreciating it would be different but was completely unprepared for how different it turned out to be." Preparation for the more experienced consultants was more thorough, although it concentrated on the visible components of culture, and they relied more on experience in the country to develop any deeper understanding.

Processes to Adapt Course Content, HRD Processes, and Trainer Behaviors

As a consequence of experience-based learning, cultural consideration within the consultancy team focused on the practical and the visible. In adapting processes and content, the emphasis was therefore placed on translation, logistics of working in other countries, obvious differences in business approach, and coping with less participative training than would be the case in the UK.

Work to adapt material to address less visible components of culture was reported to be achieved through a lengthy period of discussions between senior HRD consultants and representatives of international organizations. Those discussions considered the suitability of particular material and its match to the values of assisted organizations. Although there was no evidence that the process was theory-based, the outcome was reported as being well-received by the assisted organizations suggesting a good degree of effectiveness achieved by the practice-based approach to international competence development within the team. Documents also provided evidence of very positive reactions to the training in every country, and further evidence of obvious learning transfer.

Funding agencies and aid co-ordinators were interviewed to explore their role in the adaptation process. Their responses suggested a solid practitioner-based grounding on the importance of cultural issues, the need to adapt material, and the different cultures within Europe. However, they reported themselves as being poorly placed to discuss specific HRD cultural implications, leading to their view that consultants should have that responsibility.

Experiences during International Consultancy and their Relationship to the Theoretical Framework

The interviews identified many examples of where culture had affected the HRD content or process. Here are ten, offered to illustrate the variety of experiences and to provide the article with practical 'color'. Their relationship to the theoretical framework is explored in the conclusion section.

(a) Language - one consultant commented that, "the scary thing about working abroad was the language... I was not prepared for its impact... I could not read body language nor pick up on tone of voice." Those interviewed reported how using interpreters reduced the amount of deliverable content and introduced doubts about the accuracy of information received by trainees. Several estimated that they covered around two-thirds of what could be achieved with a British audience. Consultants also spoke about problems in translating such words as cascade, stakeholder, and leadership.

(b) Availability of local trainers - the original intention had been to transfer, through a staged process, the training program to internal trainers of the host country. However, neither the Hungarian nor Slovakian organizations employed trainers and instead added training work to job descriptions of already busy employees who lacked a knowledge of management theory and felt somewhat uncomfortable with participative training techniques.

(c) Training style - Eastern European managers were accustomed to a lecture-style of training either in a large group seated 'theater-style' or smaller groups seated around meeting tables. The British trainers were accustomed to 'U-style' seating without tables, and some found the setting in Eastern Europe daunting and less suited to encouraging participation and openness.

(d) Perceived need for management training - it was reported that attitudes varied among senior managers, mainly according to their past experiences. Some lacked any experience of management training and had problems with the concept and the need - a situation found rarely in the British public sector.

(e) Ways of doing business - ONS consultants reported several shadowside issues (Egan, 1993) including: the role of tribes as a hidden hierarchy in Kenya; the lack of openness or desire to be critical of senior management in some Eastern European situations; the need to relate personally with officials rather than relying on formal authority or systems in Botswana; and the difference between the British working day and practices in some other parts of Europe.

(f) Greater satisfaction for trainers - according to several consultants, "participants in the Eastern European programs were generally extremely positive about being involved, and displayed far more enthusiasm than British managers attending similar courses."

(g) Humor - several interviewees spoke about the significant role played by humor in the British training room and problems in using it in other countries. One interviewee highlighted potential problems: "The different sense of humor was hard - some jokes were not laughed at. I told one story, tried to be funny, but it may have offended some. I learned to be very careful with humor."

(h) Similarities between professional statistician participants in each country, many of whom were reflective learners (Honey & Mumford, 1986) interested in detail more than the big picture, and with issues around combining manager and statistician roles. Interviewees reported that the professional statistician culture appeared to have a strong influence across national boundaries.

(i) Generation differences - interviewees reported the younger managers as having better spoken English, being more enthusiastic of Western management theories, and being less skeptical of the help offered through the consultancy compared with some of their older more senior colleagues.

(j) Value differences - several interviewees spoke of observable differences in behavior due to apparent value differences, most notably on political correctness as defined in Britain. On one occasion, "such differences caused embarrassment for us and we were uncertain how to react."

Changes to Existing Practices Suggested by the Theoretical Framework

The interviews suggested that the ONS consultants had developed an effective operational level of cultural skills and awareness through practical experience, and interviews combined with documentary evidence suggested successful outcomes from the design and running of international programs. The evidence also suggested that some of the ONS experiences could have been anticipated from the theoretical framework (thus saving time), and also that the informal and incidental learning processes could be usefully supplemented by formal systems informed by the theoretical framework. The particular areas for development were:

(a) Increasing the value placed on cross-cultural HRD theory within the team - the current level of theoretical knowledge, and the perceived utility of such theories, were mixed. Supplementing reflective practice with theory offers a means to avoid potentially costly mistakes, particularly when preparing to work in a country for the first time.

(b) Introducing a systemic, systematic, theory-based process for the cultural reviewing of HRD processes and course material - current adaptation steps are based on past experience in other countries (assuming few effects from different national cultures), from experiences in the assisted country (possibly resulting in issues emerging during program delivery), and from discussions with the assisted country during program development (assuming clients are well placed to judge the suitability for their culture of material and processes).

(c) Introducing a formal, systematic approach to training and developing international consultants and sharing cross-cultural knowledge within the consultancy team, and increasing consultants' knowledge of cross-cultural HRD theory. Current approaches offer international experience over several years, supplemented by informal sharing of knowledge and experiences within the team. Development can therefore be slow and unreliable.

(d) Identifying sources of cultural information on the countries consultants plan to work with - one problem with being an occasional international provider is that experiences are limited and fewer in number and variety than in a large organization specializing in international consultancy.

(e) Developing a clearer understanding with funding agencies and aid coordinators of where responsibilities lie for assessing the cultural implications of requests for HRD support, offers of HRD help, and the delivery of HRD services. Currently, too many assumptions are made that others are assessing projects for cultural issues.

Opportunities for Advancing International HRD Understanding

The research provided some specific practitioner examples to supplement existing theories, and in doing so identified two areas where further research could advance theories to the benefit of practitioners. Those areas were:

- the need for information on the relative influences on organizational cultures of: national cultures; sectoral cultures (e.g. public or private); professional cultures (e.g. statisticians, accountants, lawyers); multi-national organizational cultures (i.e. the influences of a foreign head office with a strong corporate culture); tribal and other sub-cultures; and generational cultures (which were more noticeable in Eastern Europe more than in Britain);
- the various costs, in time and precision, of training through interpreters.

Conclusions

In the case study, the authors looked to identify how ONS HRD international experiences and practices compared with best practice in cross-cultural consultancy, and to draw conclusions about the changes needed to those practices and the implications for advancing the theories.

Through interviews with consultants and a study of records, the authors determined that ONS HRD had run successful training programs in Eastern Europe, as perceived by clients, where there was documented evidence of training transfer. The success of those programs had been achieved based on little knowledge of cultural theories, and instead by applying learning from experiences and using informal systems for sharing experiences between consultants. That success highlighted the effectiveness of a 'learning by doing' approach, although discussions on consultants' experiences also highlighted negative consequences. Firstly, consultants can take a long time to develop a satisfactory level of knowledge and skills on international HRD, which may affect their performance and confidence. Secondly, the approach relies on consultants reflecting on their experiences systematically and critically, and the degree of such reflection varies between consultants. Thirdly, it requires a systematic process for sharing learning among consultants, and an informal or unsystematic process will be less effective. Finally, it will likely produce knowledge of international HRD focused on more visible components of culture (e.g. language and ways of doing business) rather than on such components as individualism or a particular temporal focus, and that limited focus could influence the effectiveness of steps to adapt content and processes.

Based on these findings, the authors concluded that ONS HRD would benefit from making a number of changes to their practices, including by: seeking ways to increase the value placed on, and use of, HRD theories; introducing a systematic, theory-based process for the cultural adapting of content and processes; and introducing a formal systematic approach to training international consultants and for sharing learning within the team. The authors argue that these findings would be applicable to other international HRD providers whose current approach matches that of the ONS.

In addition to examining ONS practices in the light of HRD theories, the authors also examined theories in the light of ONS experiences, and found a clear link in the areas of: the need to adapt HRD content, systems, and practices; addressing different understandings of organizational terms; dealing with unique ways of doing business; and the need for consultants to develop a knowledge of cultural values and assumptions in HRD, a knowledge of values and assumptions in their own culture and that of visited countries, and developing their understanding of others, tolerance of ambiguity, interaction skills, and persistence. The ONS experience also supported existing research on the nature of the challenges facing Eastern Europe.

The ONS experiences also identified several issues not covered by the literature review, or which emerged with greater significance than expected: the influence of the statisticians' professional culture on the cultures of statistical organizations; the costs of interpretation in terms of the reduced amount of content covered and doubts on accuracy and precision; the enthusiasm of the audience; the lack of a basic understanding in some senior managers of the need for management training; and the problems transferring training knowledge and skills over to assisted organizations that lack experienced trainers. The authors felt that practitioners would benefit from the results of further research into the many influences on organizational cultures and the impact of training through interpreters.

To conclude, the case study produced evidence from the experiences of a small international HRD provider to support the practical utility of international HRD theories, and illustrated how those theories can be used to suggest improvements to international HRD practice. The evidence also identified areas where further research would be useful to practitioners.

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Management and Career Development in the UK in Practice

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Longitudinal data on changes in UK management and career development (MCD) since 1987 are presented, and an open systems model of MCD in the UK discussed. The determinants of the amount of in-company management training, its impact on the organization, and the degree to which it has achieved its objectives are identified as well as the determinants of the priority given to MCD. Evidence is also presented of the changing roles and responsibilities in managerial career development.

Keywords: Managerial, Career, UK

In 1986 and 1987, three influential reports into the education, training and development of British managers were published, each identifying major weaknesses in the system of management development in the UK, especially in comparison with its major competitors (Mangham and Silver 1986, Constable and McCormick 1987, Handy 1987). Implications for Britain's economic efficiency and relative economic decline in the 20th Century were noted, and an ambitious agenda for improving the management development system in the UK developed. However, despite a plethora of Government reports and initiatives (eg National Training Targets, National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications, Investors in People) and several small - scale studies, we lack a picture of the current state of play in management and career development (MCD) in the UK a decade on from these reports, and whether the quantity and quality of MCD has improved. We also lack a theoretical framework, based on empirical research, as to the organizational processes by which MCD takes place in organizations. This paper seeks to remedy this deficiency by providing useful longitudinal data on changes in British MCD in the last 10 years, and by developing a model of organizational MCD which seeks to identify causal relationships among the elements of the MCD system.

Theoretical Framework

There are a number of explanations for Britain's poor progress in MCD up to the 1980's (eg. Thomson 1999). Factors often cited include the late split between ownership and control, the status of managers, the links between the technical and managerial functions, the slow development of a managerial professional identity, the assumptions that managers were born, not made, and the consequent lack of linkage between education and training for managers. A number of events in the 1980's led to a greater interest in MCD (eg the recession, company turn-arounds, increasing government interest, increasing University activity in MCD).

Some models of MCD have tried to relate it to corporate strategy, using concepts such as 'fit', integration or maturity (eg Guest 1997, Garavan 1991, Burgoyne 1988). However, there is a need to move beyond existing descriptive or prescriptive models by building on the analysis of Pettigrew et al (1988) which identified several factors as likely to stimulate HRD activity: the ability to manage increased complexity, internal labour markets with open career structures, HRD aiding recruitment, and a context where internal actors and systems favour an integrated approach to recruitment, learning and career development. Conversely, factors inhibiting HRD included preoccupation with immediate tasks, a lack of background qualifications, and training perceived as a low status activity. This paper presents an 'open systems' model of MCD identifying inputs (eg structure), processes (eg policy), outputs (eg quantity of training) and outcomes (eg impact on organization).

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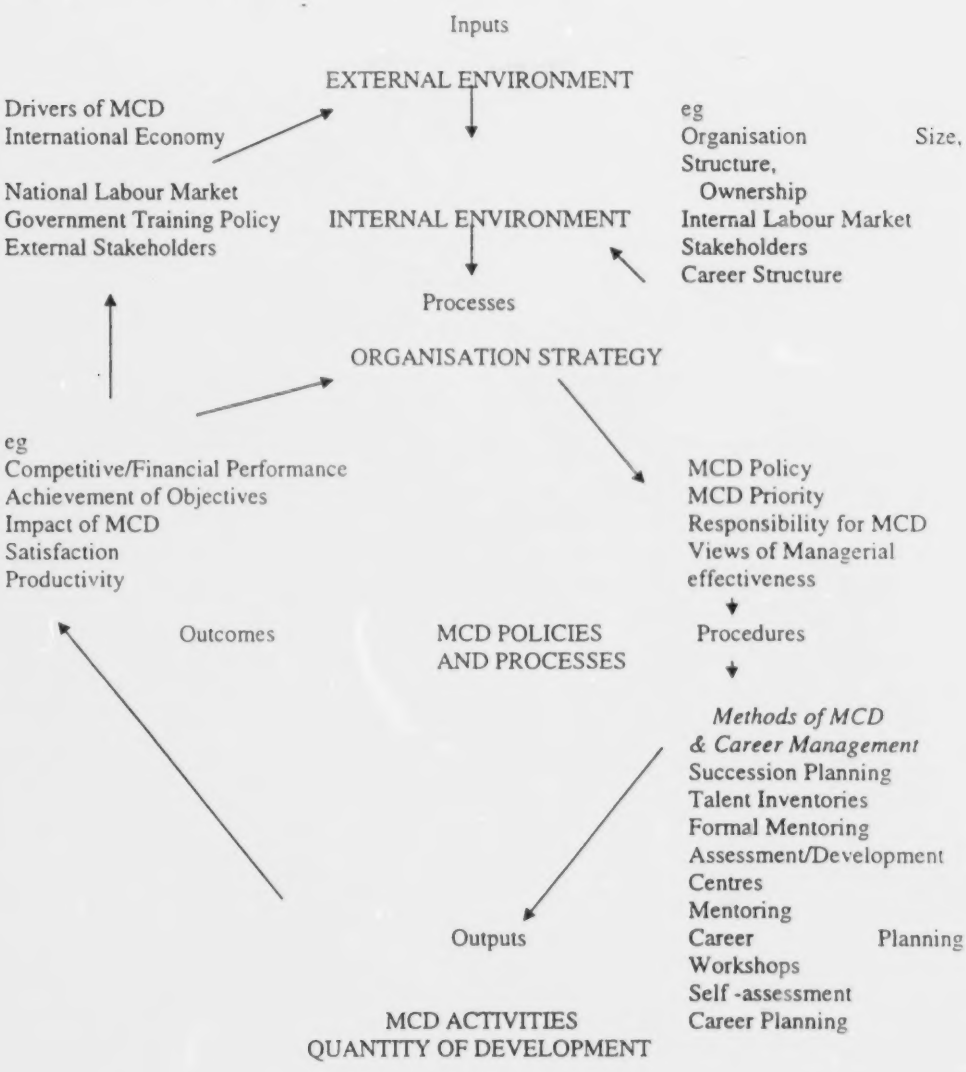
Figure 1. A Model of Management and Career Development



Research Questions

There are a number of questions which need to be asked about MCD in the UK, including:

1. How has MCD in the UK changed since 1986 / 1987?
2. What is the relative importance of environmental, structural and policy factors in explaining the quantity and impact of MCD activity in the UK?
3. What is the relative significance of the various 'drivers' of MCD in the UK?
4. Is there evidence that organizations in the UK have abandoned responsibility for managerial career development, making it an entirely individual responsibility? In other words, is there evidence of 'cellular' or 'protean' careers, as discussed by Allred et al (1996)?

Methodology

A series of large scale surveys of MCD in the UK have been conducted in 1996 and 1997, summarised in Thomson et al (1999). Here we will only report on :

(a) A 1996 telephone survey of 501 people responsible for MCD in their organization, structured for sector and size, lasting around 45 minutes and covering around 50 questions, employing many of the same questions used in Constable and McCormick (1987) and so providing valuable longitudinal data over a 10 year period.
(b) A 1997 postal questionnaire survey of c. 8000 MBA graduates drawn from membership of the Association of MBAs, using a structured sample of 500 drawn from a 17.4% response rate (n = 1398).

The primary data have already been published as research reports by the sponsoring bodies (theAssociation of MBAs 1998 and the Institute of Management 1997). This paper will present further analyses of these data, and also focus on their implications for career development in particular (Iles 1999).

Results

- *The AMBA Survey, (b)*

Respondents to the AMBA study (Association of MBAs 1997) in general reported: low levels of satisfaction with organizational MCD, but much on-going personal MCD at all levels. Much was outside employer provision, using a wide range of learning methods, with external courses and experiential learning both rated more highly than internal courses. A great determination to pursue MCD, at all levels was reported, with respondents anticipating a variety of modes and sources, both structured and unstructured and primarily driven by the individual; MCD was seen as necessary to keep up to date in a changing environment and to broaden skills and respondents were willing to make considerable personal investments in time and money. There was a substantial demand for further MCD to be recognised, and widespread access was reported to personal development facilities but with only limited reading of managerial journals. Only a limited personal role in MCD vis - a - vis other managers was envisaged, but a considerable degree of personal mobility was reported. In terms of organizational MCD, respondents reported that considerable MCD was being undertaken even without a policy framework, as many organizations only offered weak policy frameworks (no written statement and a low priority given to MCD, with a low assumption of responsibility for it by the organization). Differences in MCD seemed more related to policy than structural circumstances, but MCD did not seem to fully reflect business strategy, though company strategy was however perceived to be the primary driver of MCD, and was associated with the presence of 'strong' MCD policies. MCD generally was seen to have failed to meet its objectives or to have a positive impact on the organization.

- *The Company Survey, (a)*

Company survey respondents took a more positive view of MCD in organizations than individual managers, reporting that priority given to MCD had increased significantly compared to 10 years ago, and was expected to increase still more. Most companies were now involved in MCD, with only 4% doing no training, compared to 50% in 1987, whilst the amount of formal training carried out averaged c. 5.5 days per manager per year, compared to the 3.1 days estimated for 1987, and the 7.3 days anticipated in the forseeable future. The balance of responsibility for MCD was now seen as involving a partnership between the individual and the company, not as the responsibility of either party alone. The main drivers of MCD were perceived to be strategic, not operational or external, but appraisal was seen to be the main trigger for individual development, and much MCD seemed tactical and short - term. MCD activity appeared to range across all levels of management, was not just reserved for high - fliers, but was most emphasised at junior managerial levels. A reasonably equal balance was reported between formal and informal training activity, as was a considerable move forward in the language of managerial competence as compared to 1987, with better defined objectives for MCD. However, few major changes in training methods were anticipated, and post – experience education and training was now ranked higher than pre - experience education in terms of what makes a good manager compared to 1987, though inherent ability and job experience were still ranked higher, as they were in 1987. In general, MCD was judged to be achieving its objectives and having a positive impact on the organization.

The picture of MCD in the UK that emerges from these two studies seems more positive than it was in 1987, and MCD appears to be growing in significance, addressing research question 1. In order to address research

questions 2, 3 and 4 and to test the model of MCD presented in Figure 1, further analyses have been carried out on the primary data collected from the company telephone survey, (Thomson et al 1998). The main dependent variable analysed here is the output variable of amount of training, as measured in days per manager per year. Each variable was tested separately, and the clusters of variables were also tested for their collective impact. Table 1 presents results from the clusters of variables only.

Table 1
Determinants of the Outputs of Training From External, Internal, Policy and Career Clusters

R^2	0.201
adjusted R^2	0.174
DF	14
Listing of variables	
Beta (sig B)	Beta
Regressor set : external	0.15***
Regressor set : internal	0.107*
Regressor set : policy	0.412***
Regressor set : career	0.047

* $p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$
(Adapted from Thomson et al (1998), p98)

Regression analysis shows that the policy variables (existence of a policy statement, priority given to MCD, organizational responsibility for MCD, and views on what contributes to the development of a good manager) contribute much more strongly than external or internal structural variables or career variables to explaining variance, in that order. Of the policy variables, priority given to MCD emerged most strongly, and policy variables also most strongly predicted amount of training anticipated in the future. Priority given to MCD again emerged as the most important single variable here, along with internal variables. Satisfaction with the amount of training provided was even more strongly predicted by the policy variables, along with the internal variables. Only three perceived drivers of MCD, out of fifteen variables selected from suggestions of a panel of experts and rated by respondents in terms of importance on a 1 - 10 scale (National Vocational Qualifications, competitive activity and demand from managers), predicted the amount of training undertaken (Table 2).

Table 2
Amount of Training Related to Perceived Drivers

R^2	0.168	
adjusted R^2	0.135	
DF	16	
Listing of Variables	*Beta*	*Mean (S.E.)* 1 - 10 scale
Strategies	0.097	7.21 (0.09)
Structural Change	0.063	6.25 (0.10)
Cost of MCD	- 0.087	5.07 (0.10)
Support of Board	- 0.088	6.84 (0.10)
Management demand	- 0.113*	5.89 (0.08)
Company Culture	- 0.017	6.38 (0.09)
Individual ability to do job	0.063	6.60 (0.08)
Individual potential to progress	- 0.038	6.36 (0.09)
Staff retention	0.038	5.58 (0.10)
Career development	0.119	5.98 (0.09)
Staff motivation	0.060	6.02 (0.09)
Business efficiency	0.070	7.23 (0.08)
Competitive activity	0.129*	5.40 (0.12)
Customers	- 0.030	6.36 (0.11)
Vocational Qualifications	0.130*	3.49 (0.11)
Investors in People	0.010	4.54 (0.14)

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$
(Adapted from Thomson et al 1998, p. 99).

Priority given to MCD also emerged as the dominant variable in terms of predicting the extent to which MCD objectives were achieved and the perceived impact of MCD, the outcome variables in figure 1 (both rated on a 1 - 10 scale, Table 3).

Table 3

Influencing Variables on Achievement of Objectives and Impact on Organization (Outcome Variables)

	Achievement of Objectives	Impact on Organization
R^2	0.255	0.308
adjusted R^2	0.249	0.302
DF	4	4
Listing of variables	Beta	Beta
Amount of Training	0.156***	0.099*
Formal / Informal balance	- 0.009	- 0.027
Priority given to MCD	0.379***	0.436***
Responsibility for career	0.123**	0.184***

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$
(Adapted from Thomson et al 1998, p101)

Company responsibility for career development was however interestingly also strongly predictive of positive impact and achievement. The amount of training carried out predicted both whether MCD achieved its objectives and whether it had a strong impact on the organisation. A further set of analyses was undertaken to explore what

predicted the policy variables, including priority given to MCD. Priority given to MCD as a dependent variable was predicted by the career variables in particular (career structure, upward progress, and existence of fast - track, Table 4).

Table 4

Priority given to MCD in relation to external, internal and career clusters of variables.

R^2	0.155
adjusted R^2	0.149
DF	12
Listing of variables	Beta
Regressor set : internal	0.146***
Regressor set : external	0.190***
Regressor set : career	0.255***

* $p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$

(Adapted from Thomson et al 1998, p102)

However, the strongest predictors in terms of individual variables were the existence of a separate budget for MCD and non - British ownership of the company. The existence of a policy statement for MCD was strongly associated with the drivers of Investors in People, staff retention, support of the Board, and the importance of strategic considerations (Table 5).

Table 5

Existence of Policy Statement Related to Perceived Drivers

R^2	0.158
adjusted R^2	0.126
DF	16
Listing of variables	Beta
Strategy	- 0.201***
Structural Change	0.049
Cost of MCD	- 0.009
Support of Board	- 0.163**
Management demand	- 0.030
Company culture	- 0.057
Individual ability to do job	- 0.013
Individual potential to progress	0.059
Staff retention	0.134*
Career development	- 0.126
Staff motivation	0.020
Business efficiency	0.089
Competitive activity	0.004
Customers	- 0.048
Vocational Qualifications	- 0.017
Investors in People	- 0.192

*$p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

(Adapted from Thomson et al 1998, p. 103)

Implications for Managerial Career Development

In terms of research question 4, analysis of the two surveys does not suggest that the extreme views of the 'career is dead' school can be entirely supported. If the 'career is dead' school were accurate in their view of what is happening to managerial careers, we might expect the following to be reported from individuals and organizations in the two surveys:

1. A decline in the use of career management techniques, alongside a rise in the use of career planning techniques, as depicted in figure 1.
2. A decline in those features characteristic of 'relational'/employment security contracts, such as long-term planning and diffuse obligations alongside a rise in those features associated with 'transactional' contracts, such as short time horizons and specific obligations (Iles 1999).
3. A rise in behaviour characteristic of 'career resilient' managers, such as moving quickly, showing commitment to life-long learning, taking responsibility for career development, continuing commitment to the organization, being resistant to career disruptions, showing flexibility, and displaying evidence of being networked and connected (Iles 1997).
4. A rise in 'cellular' or 'protean' career behaviours, with the individual, not the organization, taking responsibility for career development (Allred et al 1996).

1. The AMBA Study, Study b.

With the usual caveats over representativeness, this study does seem to show some evidence of 'resilient' behaviours and the use of career planning techniques by AMBA members - perhaps not surprising, given the nature of a sample highly committed to education, qualifications and personal and career development, and one in which we might expect to detect the first glimmerings of 'cellular' behaviour (Allred et al 1996). Respondents seem clearly focussed in their commitment to continuous professional development; they seem clearly networked and connected in their membership of professional associations; and above all perhaps career resilient in their commitment to life - long learning, as indicated by their responses to what makes a good manager and their aspirations to continuous development. However, there is some indication that they have not turned their backs entirely on organizational support in a purely 'cellular' or 'transactional' way. They still see the value of in-company training, albeit with a low opinion of what they have experienced. There is some indication that they see career development as moving towards a middle position, where responsibility for career development is shared between employee and employer. We might characterise this position as a 'partnership' model, and infer that the psychological contract of the AMBA respondents includes the provision of in-company training. However, this is in many cases either an unfulfilled promise, or respondents are often disappointed in the quality or relevance of what they are receiving.

Other indications of 'boundaryless,' if not 'cellular,' careers are the findings that only a minority of respondents report being appointed for a 'career' (perhaps evidence of short-term transactional contracts?), and that respondents had on average worked in 4.2 previous organizations, crossing various categories of size, sector, and employment status. In addition, they anticipated moving frequently in the future. Their overwhelming intention to pursue more MCD, driven primarily by the individual as a means of keeping up-to-date and to develop broader skills and supported by a willingness to make substantial personal commitments of time and money, is almost a text-book definition of the flexible, life-long learning, commited, career-resilient manager.

On the other hand, many managers, (especially those in large companies with a clear policy statement on MCD, where the company takes responsibility for it and where MCD is perceived to have a positive impact and to be experienced as satisfying by recipients) reported the existence of planned career structures and succession planning practices. This indicates some continuing company responsibility for career development, perhaps characteristic of a 'partnership' model as a matter of strategic choice by the company.

2. The Company Study, Study a.

The company study gives further support to the widespread emergence of a 'partnership' model of MCD in the face of the emergence of strong 'transactional' or 'resilient' behaviours and attitudes. Some company respondents indicated a strongly transactional, specific, short-term view of MCD. For example, many companies did not expect managers to stay with them, and appointed them for a job rather than a career. However, other reponses reveal a longer-term, even 'relational' focus, such as the operation of internal, rather than external labour markets, the widespread use of succession planning, the commitment to development of all managers whatever their age or

grade, the linking of development with appraisal, the expectation that many managers will spend their entire careers in the organization, and the acceptance that responsibility for MCD is to be shared equally between the individual and the organization.

In terms of the model depicted in Figure 1, it appears as if company responsibility for career development is highly predictive of MCD having a positive impact on the organization. Career variables also predicted whether the organization gave priority to MCD, especially the presence of career structures, upward progress, and the existence of fast-track career management systems. Thus it appears that if UK companies do take responsibility for managerial careers, then this taking responsibility is associated both with relatively high priority given to MCD and with MCD having a positive impact on the organization. Priority given to MCD is in turn associated with the amount of training actually carried out by companies and with the amount of training anticipated to be carried out in the future, as well as with satisfaction with the training carried out and with judgements of whether training had achieved its objectives.

It appears that though many UK managers are taking responsibility for their own career development in ways resonant of 'transactional', 'cellular' and 'resilient' managers, especially in their commitment to career planning and to continuous professional development and networking, this has not meant that organizations have simply abandoned responsibility for career development. Iles (1997) argues in favour of 'sustainable' career development, where fostering resilience is seen as in the interests of both organization and employee, and where partnership between the parties involves commitments and entitlements on both sides. These might include the individual offering high performance, life-long learning, flexibility and commitment in return for development, challenge, and enhanced marketability and employability. The organization may therefore need to provide continuing support in the form of opportunities for self-assessment, benchmarking of skills, and continuous development as well as lateral and other moves, communication on strategic direction and changes, the training of managers as career coaches and counsellors, and the provision of career and learning resource centres. Rather than seeing a move from purely 'relational' to purely 'transactional' contracts, we may see the emergence of a diversity of contracts, mixing elements of 'transactional' contracts such as high pay for high performance and the assessment of goals and the achievement targets alongside aspects of 'relational' contracts, such as a commitment to internal labour markets and to the long-term development of managers.

Limitations

The research conducted clearly has a number of limitations. It was not possible to ascertain how far the sampling procedure for the AMBA study reflected the total membership, due to recording limitations. Respondents are likely to show greater interest in MCD than non - respondents, and AMBA members neither reflect the views of all managers or even of all MBAs (a highly aspirational group). In many cases, company and AMBA respondents are probably giving impressionistic answers, lacking access to relevant records. Many organisations kept few records, and a 'corporate' view may have been ascertained. Amount of training is used as the output variable, rather than perhaps more meaningful but harder to measure variables like numbers trained with appropriate skills and competencies. Outcomes are measured in terms of perceived impact and achievement of objectives, not value - added or contribution to organisational performance. There are many other outputs, outcomes and drivers of relevance to assessing the impact of MCD than are measured in this study. In addition, informal process of MCD have been neglected in favour of a concentration on formal processes only. Thus the study must be regarded as a first step in developing a model of MCD, but goes some way to address the research questions.

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Information and Feedback Seeking in U.S. and British Human Resources Development and Training Settings

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This survey-based study investigated information and feedback seeking behavior in U.S. and British Human Resource Development and training settings. It involved some 400 participants at two U.S. and 3 British universities and government agencies. Using self- and other-rating forms, the results indicated differences in perception of teaching styles and source, frequency, and usefulness of information regarding performance feedback and learning objectives. The study suggests that adult learners self-regulate in learning situations to a greater degree than instructors anticipate. The study has implications for the education and training of HRD instructors and trainers and adds to the knowledge base of instructional theory.

Keywords: Feedback, Training, Instructional Theory

This study investigated a series of research questions related to information and feedback seeking (FBS) behaviors of participants in Human Resources (HR) education and training. Feedback research has been prevalent in many social science fields and is considered a core construct in areas as diverse as instructional design, training, performance technology, systems engineering, and job design. An informal survey of current HRD journals, however, has found very few empirical studies related to the topic. While the general effectiveness of feedback appears unquestioned, there is a need to explore the topic anew and, especially, from an international perspective. Further, most of the existing research has focused on the trainer or instructor, treating the trainee as a relatively passive recipient of such feedback. This study takes a very focused look at the role of the training participant in actively seeking information about his/her learning requirements and actual performance during training.

Overview of the Literature

Feedback has been the focus of research by a large number of researchers in the fields of education, psychology, and organization behavior over the past 100 years (Brinko, 1993; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Feedback has been conceptualized as a "special case of the general communication process in which some sender ...conveys a message...to a recipient" (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979, p. 350) related to some aspect of the recipient's behavior. In the organizational context, feedback is most frequently related to performance and consists of evaluative statements about to the "effectiveness of one's work behavior" (Taylor, Fisher, & Ilgen, 1984, p. 82) and in particular about the results of past behavior (Van Dyne, 1992).

Feedback research originated in classic behaviorism and stimulus-response theory (Annett, 1969) and, more recently, cybernetics or control theory where knowledge of the results (KR) of one's behavior is seen as useful in regulating subsequent action. Feedback is seen as crucial for the functioning, maintenance, and adaptation of social systems, whether at the individual, group, organization, or societal levels because it provides information about the system's current state compared to some standard (Taylor, Fisher, & Ilgen, 1984). Without feedback, goal attainment would be improbable and action haphazard and random. Feedback is generally considered to improve performance and thus constitutes an important organizational and individual resource (Ashford & Cummings, 1985; Campbell & Campbell, 1988). A recent meta-analysis of feedback research by Kluger and DeNisi (1996), however, revealed important exceptions to the widely shared assumption that feedback consistently improves performance. Feedback interventions (FI), according to these authors, "have highly variable effects on performance, such that in some conditions FIs improve performance, in other conditions FIs have no apparent effects on performance, and in yet others FIs debilitate performance" (p. 254). Most of these moderating conditions are poorly understood and point to the need for continued research efforts on feedback despite the long history of feedback research. Moreover, recent reviews (for example Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; and Van Dyne, 1992) emphasized the

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multidimensional and multipurposive character of the construct and have called for renewed research efforts to deepen our understanding of this important topic.

The concept of feedback is closely linked to the notion of learning and therefore critical to the field of Human Resource Development. In a behavioristic frame, feedback provides information about the appropriateness of various courses of action in a trial-and-error mode. Leaders in organizations provide employees cues that reinforce or extinguish certain behaviors through a variety of rewards and sanctions, such as raises, promotions, desirable job assignments, and positive or negative performance evaluations. Successful training programs incorporate feedback as an instructional design element (Goldstein, 1993; Kowitz & Smith, 1985; Viau & Clark, 1987) to increase learning during training and increase the transfer of training (Schoenfeldt, 1996). A large number of research studies have addressed feedback in training settings. Most of these studies are experimental in nature and have addressed issues as diverse as the effects of feedback on self-efficacy related to the training task (Karl, O'Leary-Kelly, & Martocchio, 1993), transfer to training (Phye, 1991; Schroth, 1997a; Schroth, 1997b), achievement of training outcomes and motivation (Quinones, 1995), attitudes toward the training content and group members in cooperative teams (Archer-Kath, Johnson, & Johnson, 1994), and the effects of feedback during training for dangerous task performance (Kleinan, 1988).

Consequently, a voluminous literature exists related to the practice of using feedback during the instructional process to improve training and education. Among the more recent journal publications are guidelines for industry trainers (Viau & Clark, 1987), for supervisors providing in-service staff training (Parsons & Reid, 1995), and for college and university instructors (Dunkins & Precians, 1992; Brinko, 1993).

Most of the research, however, focuses on the antecedents, processes, and outcomes of providing feedback, while comparatively little attention has focused on the issue of information and feedback seeking. The shift from feedback giving to feedback seeking behavior (FSB) constitutes a conceptual and paradigmatic shift in focus that has renewed vigor and interest in an old concept. Rather than viewing the employee as a passive recipient of feedback provided by others, the FSB perspective posits that individuals are active participants who seek out information in the organizational context from a variety of sources on a frequent basis. In this context, feedback is viewed as a valuable information resource for individuals who actively monitor their environment for cues related to various goals. Given the open systems nature of organizations (Katz & Kahn, 1967) characterized by equifinality (more than one possible way to attain a goal) and equivocality (competing goals with equal valence), individuals in work environments are flooded with information and often experience uncertainty about what behaviors are appropriate and what goals to pursue. Role and goal uncertainty, ambiguity, and conflict are especially characteristic when individuals enter organizations as new employees; are transferred, promoted, or begin new assignments; or during times of organizational change (Ashford, 1989). Individuals at all levels of an organization, therefore, engage in frequent self-monitoring and seek information from the environment in order to reduce uncertainty, decide toward which goals to allocate their efforts and time, and make judgments about their own competence (Ashford, 1989; Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Several monitoring strategies are available, ranging from implicit (such as vicariously learning from the consequences of a colleague's action) to explicit (such as asking one's superior for direct feedback on a project.) Each strategy carries specific costs in terms of the effort required, the risk involved, and the amount and type of inference necessary to obtain the desired information; thus individuals will seek information if "the message reward value exceeds the expenditures incurred in obtaining it" (Ashford & Cummings, 1983, p. 387.)

The FBS perspective is built upon the assumptions that individuals self-regulate their behaviors and are actively involved in meaning-making. The FSB literature, therefore, takes its theoretical roots from control theory (as does the traditional feedback literature), but also symbolic interactionism (Berger & Luckman, 1966) with its emphasis on the individual interpretations and construction of reality. "Thus, individuals do not respond directly and instinctively to events, but rather respond in terms of their interpretations of those events" (Ashford, 1989, p. 143.) The perspective responds to the call for a more active and comprehensive view of employee behavior, rather than the relatively passive view granted to individuals in the behavioral sciences (Brief & Aldag, 1981). It also begins to address some the call for increased research from the employees' perspectives raised by Bjorquist and Lewis (1994).

FBS has personality- and situation-related antecedents. At the individual level it is related to a person's tolerance for ambiguity, and it plays an important role in managing the impression an individual wishes to convey in work-related situations. Performers, in particular, are often less likely to seek feedback because of fear to appear less than competent (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). Vandewalle (1995) further suggested that the frequency, type, timing, and target of feedback seeking behavior were influenced by an individual's goal orientation (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Individuals with a learning goal orientation (focused on improving their abilities, acquiring new skills, and mastering new situations) will seek feedback more frequently, more immediately, and from an expert source, than individuals with a performance goal orientation. Those intent on demonstrating and

validating the adequacy of their ability by seeking favorable judgments and avoiding negative judgments related to their abilities will seek feedback less frequently, with longer delay, and from a source who possesses organizational power.

Situation- and context-based influences on feedback seeking behaviors include cultural norms and characteristics of the feedback source, the nature of the feedback that was obtained, and the nature of the relationship between the feedback seeker and the source. Technology can play an important role in this: as Ang, Cummings, Straub, and Early (1993) found, individuals in computer-mediated feedback environments sought feedback more frequently than individuals in face-to-face feedback environments, especially when the feedback giver was perceived to be in a bad mood.

Personal outcomes of FBS include an increase in the amount and rate of concept learning (Schroth, 1997a, 1997b). Morrison (1993a, 1993b) demonstrated the linkage between frequency of information seeking and overall satisfaction, intention to stay with an organization, and job performance among newcomers to an organization. Feedback seeking, as Madzar (1995) pointed, is of value to employees and organizations because it "reduces uncertainty about behaviors as well as about how these behaviors are evaluated by others" (p. 338). FBS constitutes a crucial aspect of employees' self-regulation framework, it reduces time-on-task, and is positively related to goal attainment.

The implications of FBS research for HRD practice have been summarized by Madzar (1995): since feedback is an important resource for individuals and organizations, opportunities to seek feedback should be enhanced. This can be accomplished through training (stressing the importance of FBS, encouraging process as well as outcome feedback seeking, and reducing the personal risk involved in seeking feedback through role-modeling) and through organization development (developing technologies that facilitate the feedback process, creating a culture where feedback seeking is encouraged, and changing communication norms and expectations.)

Purpose of the Study

The focus of this study, then, is to examine the process of feedback seeking in management training and HRD university instruction settings in the United States, Britain, and selected Asian countries. By using management training and HRD university instruction settings for this field-based research, this study expands the body of existing FBS research into an area of central concern to HRD, provides an international perspective, and provides an extension of traditional research focused on feedback giving in training and education.

Management and leadership training constitute the second largest category of training provided in the United States (Training, 1997). Over 85% of all U.S. organization with more than 100 employees report to conduct some form of management, leadership, or supervisory training. The extent of management training has been attributed to the flattening of organizations and the increase in job roles at all levels of an organization. Management skills are seen as critical for an organization's success, and research findings have confirmed their important role for a firm's performance (Gordon & DiTomasio, 1992; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Yammarino, Spangler, & Bass, 1993).

Management training is appropriate for the study of FSB, in particular to the extent that it presents a novel situation for trainees who are advancing in an organization. In this situation, new behaviors, skills, knowledge, and attitudes are introduced which are of importance to employees who will be assuming new levels of responsibility in their organization. Management training often serves as a rite of initiation to employees and signals their impending enhanced status and responsibility in an organization. In particular for newly appointed managers and supervisors, the behaviors learned in management training are important because they represent those skills they will need in order to succeed in their new roles.

Similarly, HRD is among the fasted growing areas within schools of education in the United States. HRD graduate courses are attended by full-time and part-time students who often work in professional positions in business and industry. Often, courses are taught at night to accommodate the schedules of working adults and by instructors with extensive business and industry experience. These instructors are either practicing professionals themselves and teach on a part time basis, or have had extensive business and industry experience themselves prior to joining a university faculty. Moreover, many HRD faculty continue to be actively involved in service and consulting work and maintain active professional practices.

Whether in management training situations or in HRD university instruction, students prepare for future professional roles, and learning, in this situation, represents an important performance criterion (Martocchio & Dulebohn, 1994). Students and trainees (hereafter: students) can be expected to engage in feedback seeking behavior to obtain information about the training and learning objectives and to seek feedback to assess their performance relative to the objectives.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1) What sources of information regarding learning requirements and feedback about their performance do students use? How useful are the information and feedback they receive? How frequently do training participants use each source during a training event?
2) What individual level variables influence the amount, frequency, and source of information and feedback seeking? Does the amount of variance explained vary by culture?
3) What contextual and instructor-related variables influence the amount, frequency, and source of information and feedback seeking? Does the amount of variance explained vary by culture?
4) How is the information and feedback-seeking behavior related to perceived relevance of the course and intention to transfer the learning?

Methodology

This was a non-experimental, survey-based study using a post-hoc research design using multiple samples from the U.K. and the U.S. The study used volunteer samples from four institutions offering graduate and professional education and training in HRD and from one organizations conducting management development training.

At each institutions, volunteers from among the teaching faculty were recruited and asked to participate in this study by administering a 2o-minute written questionnaire to volunteers from among the students currently enrolled in their HRD courses, to complete a 10-minute questionnaire on their own teaching style.

The data collection for this study consisted of two written surveys, one each to be completed by the students and the instructors. The student survey was a 50-item instrument developed from existing and psychometrically proven scales. It consisted of Likert-type items, short scenarios, and ranking questions. Pilot tests had established that the instrument takes an average of less than 20 minutes to complete. The instructor questionnaire was a shortened and parallel version of the student questionnaire with 40 questions that took less than 15 minutes to complete. All scales used in the two instruments had been tested in previous research and yielded acceptable measures of validity and reliability. The questionnaires were completed anonymously and confidentially.

Results

The surveys were administered in the summer and fall of 1998. 299 of the initial sample of 383 students in 20 courses participated in the survey, for an overall response rate of 78%. In addition, 24 trainers and instructors returned completed surveys. Table 1 shows the demographic information for the sample. Chi-square tests established no differences in gender or age among participants from the five institutions. There were differences, however, by education and professional experience.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics, reliability indices and zero-order correlations among the variables in this study. All scales showed sufficient internal reliability and were minimally intercorrelated, suggesting independence of the constructs measured.

The results show that, as a group, students rated their instructors highest on their ability to provide inspirational motivation and to act as role models by acting in a charismatic manner. Lower scores were given to the instructors' ability to react to individual needs and, surprisingly, to provide intellectually challenging content. Students ranked about in the middle on the individualism/collectivism scale and on the learning versus performance orientations. They reported comparatively lower levels of motivation to learn, intention to transfer the course material, and the perceived usefulness of the course material. They also reported average levels of ambiguity for tolerance. With respect to feedback and information seeking behavior, the results show higher average scores for seeking information about course and learning requirements than for obtaining feedback about their performance. They sought information about learning requirements primarily from the course assignments and their peers, followed by the instructors, and least from their own thoughts and feelings. In contrast, students used their own thoughts and feelings most often to obtain feedback about how well they were performing in the course, followed by the assignments and peers, and least from the instructors.

When comparing student scores to instructor perceptions, significant differences emerged. Overall, instructors overrated the degree to which they provided individual consideration to each student (instructor score:

4.26, rank 1 of 4; student score: 3.63, rank 4 of 4). They also overestimated their impact related to providing intellectually stimulating education and training. Instructors, further, underestimated the degree to which their students perceived them as acting in a charismatic manner.

Table 1

Response Rates and Demographic Characteristics

	U.S.			U.K.				Overall
	Univ1	Univ2	Total	Univ3	Univ4	Org1	Total	
Number of Courses	2	5	7	3	1	9	20	
Instructors	2	5	7	5	1	11	12	24
Initial Student Sample	98	75	173	81	9	120	210	383
Valid Responses	85	60	145	51	5	98	154	299
Response Rate	87%	80%	84%	63%	56%	82%	73%	78%
Gender:								
Male	37%	30%	34%	22%	60%	40%	35%	34%
Female	63%	70%	66%	78%	40%	60%	65%	66%
Age: mean (s.d.)	24.32 (6.91)	31.22(10.6)	27.22 (9.32)	33.34 (7.22)	35.20 (4.66)	34.52 (8.71)	34.24 (8.21)	30.84 (9.24)
Education:								
< B.A.	0	13%		n/a	n/a	67%		30%
B.A.	73%	57%		n/a	n/a	24%		50%
M.A.	27%	30%		n/a	n/a	9%		20%
Prof. Experience								
Mean years (s.d.)	3.22 (6.41)	9.54 (7.81)		8.56 (7.22)	6.00 (2.45)	14.0 (8.5)		9.10 (8.35)

Table 2

Scale Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations < .05
(N=299)

Scale	Mean (s.d.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.Referent/Constituents	3.01 (.59)	[.84]															
2. Referent/ System	3.63 (.72)	.39*	[.76]														
3. Referent/Self	3.19 (.80)	.51*	.38*	[.81]													
4.Feedback/Constituents	2.42 (.58)	.60*			[.81]												
5. Feedback/System	2.88 (.97)		.49*	.37*	.71*	[.86]											
6. Feedback/Self	3.05 (.90)		.31*	.57*		.52*	[.78]										
7. Charisma	4.01 (.58)		.39*			.28*	.26*	[.74]									
8. Inspirational Motivation	4.13 (.66)		.17*	.12*	.56*	.15*		.67*	[.68]								
9. Intellectual Stimulation	3.80 (.72)		.41*	.21*		.25*		.75*	.52*	[.72]							
10. Individual Consideration	3.63 (.57)		.34*	.28*		.21*	.17*	.65*	.61*	.72*	[.76]						
11. Goal Orientation	.48 (.50)											[.65]					
12. Tolerance for Ambiguity	2.45 (.69)								-.13*			-.38*	[.72]				
13. Cultural Value	.67 (.41)		-.12*										-.16*	[.83]			
14. Motivation to learn 4)	2.89 (1.09)		-.18*					-.22*	-.14*	-.18*	-.25*	-.17*			[.86]		
15. Motivation to Transfer	2.89 (1.05)		-.20*					-.39*	-.25*	-.28*	-.35*	-.18*			.80*	[.83]	
16. Perceived Utility	2.72 (1.36)		-.23*					-.31*		-.19*	-.27*	-.18*			.88*	.79*	[.97]

Note: *=p<.05, **=p<.01, Diagonals: Chronbach's alpha

Instructors further overestimated the amount and source of students' information and feedback seeking behaviors. They thought of themselves as the most important source for information on learning requirements and feedback about learning performance. Table 3 shows student and instructor scores.

Table 3

Student and Instructor Scores on Instructor and Feedback/Information Seeking Scales

Scale	Instructors (N=24)	Students (N=299)
Charisma	3.78 (.51)	4.01 (.58)
Individual Consideration	4.26 (.48)	3.63 (.87)
Inspirational Motivation	4.15 (.49)	4.13 (.66)
Intellectual Stimulation	4.03 (.48)	3.80 (.72)
Feedback Constituencies	3.60 (.46)	2.78 (.50)
Feedback System	3.22 (.53)	2.88 (.97)
Feedback Self	3.68 (.70)	3.05 (.90)
Referent Constituents	3.85 (.49)	3.23 (.42)
Referent Systems	3.87 (.62)	3.63 (.72)
Referent Self	3.74 (.68)	3.19 (.80)

Instructor-related variables played a major role in determining the amount of information students sought. Individual Consideration, for example, accounted for 15 percent of the variance in seeking information about learning requirements from course assignments and peers. Intellectual Stimulation accounted for 26 percent of the variance in the amount of information sought. In contrast, students' perceptions of the value of the course determined how much feedback about their performance they sought. When students found the course material relevant, they sought more information about their performance and did so more frequently. Where they were motivated to learn the course material, they sought more performance feedback from their own thoughts and feelings.

Finally, regression analyses were conducted to determine which factors contributed to the three outcome variables: motivation to learn, perceived utility, and intention to transfer. Almost one-half (47%) of the variance in Motivation to Learn was accounted for by four variables: Intention to Transfer (33%), Perceived Utility (6%), Usefulness of Information about Learning Requirements (6%), and Amount of Feedback from Assignments and Peers (3%). 44% of Perceived Utility was accounted for by Intention to Transfer (33%), Frequency of Information about Learning Requirements (6%), and Motivation to Learn (5%).

Conclusions

This study sought to investigate the relationship between instructor and student-related variables to information and feedback seeking behavior in HRD education and training situations. Obtaining survey data from 20 different HRD courses, in five different university and government agency settings and in the US and the UK, the survey resulted in a number of insights related to the research questions.

The results of this study indicate empirical evidence that adult learners use their own thoughts and feelings as a primary source for obtaining feedback about their performance in a learning situation. The second most frequently used source is assignments, with the instructor being used least often. With respect to learning requirements, students used assignments and peer most often, followed by the instructor and their own thoughts and feelings.

Instructors tended to overestimate the amount, frequency, and usefulness of performance feedback and information about learning requirements that students were seeking. Students sought considerably less feedback and performance information than their instructors assumed they did. Also, instructors tended to overestimate their own role in providing feedback.

Instructors also overestimated the amount of individual consideration and intellectual stimulation they were providing: students reported receiving considerably less individual attention and intellectually stimulating training and education than their instructors perceived. On the other hand, instructors tended to underestimate the degree to which their students perceived them as charismatic.

Instructional styles influence the feedback and information seeking behavior of students. Individual

consideration and intellectual stimulation, in particular, explained a sizeable amount of the variance of both behaviors. In turn, student perception of the relevance of the course determined their level of performance feedback seeking.

Finally, the three outcome variables measured in this study were highly intercorrelated: students are motivated to learn the course material to the extent that they perceive it as relevant and intend to transfer it.

Interestingly, neither orientation toward individualism or collectivism, nor tolerance for ambiguity or learning orientation appeared to influence feedback and information seeking behavior. This finding is in contrast to previous studies.

The implications of this study extend to the practice of HRD training and education and the preparation of trainers and educators in the field. True to adult learning principles, adults appear to self-regulate their behavior to a larger degree than instructors are aware of. Instructors tend to overestimate their own roles and importance in providing feedback, paying personal attention to students, and conducting courses that challenge the students' minds. Given the premise that it is helpful for instructors to have an accurate picture of students' perception, instructors might be advised to revise their own expectations regarding students' behavior and obtain more frequent feedback about their students' opinion about their own teaching and training styles. Where trainers and educators pay attention to individuals' learning needs and challenge their assumptions and beliefs, students are more likely to seek information and feedback about the course and their performance. Lastly, students' motivation to learn appears to be influenced primarily by their perception of the relevance of the material and their intention to transfer the learning. Facilitating the transfer or, at least, increasing the likelihood that there is opportunity to apply the newly learned material at the work site, can, in turn, increase the students' motivation to learn. Transfer, it appears, should be considered prior to the course and not only upon completion of it.

This study was conducted in clearly defined settings: university HRD instruction and a series of management training courses. The fact that the study contained 20 sites and courses lends confidence to its findings. Clearly, however, there is a need to replicate the study in different settings and with different performance requirements to examine whether the findings are an artifact of the specific settings of this study or, in fact, can be found elsewhere. Further, a more detailed analysis by course is required to investigate what specific aspects of the 20 courses in this study contributed to the findings. Equally important will be to conduct longitudinal research to find whether and what kind of movement or chance in FBS behavior occurs.

Feedback and information seeking behaviors are complex, yet critical issues for HRD. As the learning requirements of adults in the workplace increase, so will our profession need to advance the research on learning for work. This study contributes to this agenda in a small way.

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